
The Southern Africa Media Center

SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA NOTES

Autumn 1979

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Generations of Resistance
The Long-Awaited Complement to *Dimbaza*?

NEW FILM ON SOUTH AFRICA

Though *Last Grave at Dimbaza* no doubt remains the most powerful indictment of apartheid ever to be filmed, many have long lamented its shortcomings. The most glaring of these is the film's exclusive, one-dimensional portrayal of blacks as merely victims of history rather than as subjects of their own history as well.

We have been told that Peter Davis' new film *Generations of Resistance* (now in its final editing stages) will at long last fill this vacuum. For *Generations of Resistance* attempts nothing less than to tell the dramatic story of the rise of black nationalism in South Africa.

In 1905, the African chief Bombata led a guerrilla uprising in opposition to the hut tax imposed by the British colonial power. His revolt was savagely repressed by the Gatling gun. Bombata's head was cut off and its picture placed on post cards that British troops sent home to their sweethearts. Today, when Africans are again taking up arms to reclaim their country, it is in the name of Bombata.

Using rare archival footage and the testimony from those who led and participated in the events depicted, the film sweeps through the history of South Africa. Pixley ka Sema and the founding of the African National Congress (ANC), the Native Land Act, Nelson and Winnie Mandela, Oliver Tambo, the Women's campaigns of the 1950's, Roberto Sobukwe and the beginning of the Pan-African Congress (PAC), the Sharpsville massacre, the Pondo revolt, the building of the underground, the hunger strikes at Robben Island prison camp, Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement, and, of course, the Soweto uprisings are all there.

Unlike Adjali's *The Rising Tide* (also available from the Southern Africa Media Center), *Generations of Resistance* avoids the overly rhetorical polemicizing of the



photo credit: Peter Davis

Lanford Ganyile, a leader of the Pondo rebellion, from Generations of Resistance.

narrator. First hand accounts of the events speak for themselves. Davis limits the narration to the presentation of factual information.

E.I. Reddy, the director of the United Nation's Centre Against Apartheid, has seen the final cut of the film and said that it "should be extremely helpful in promoting understanding of the long and arduous path traveled by Africans in their fight for freedom and human dignity."

We at the Southern Africa Media Center have not yet seen the final version. However, on the assumption that *Generations of Resistance* lives up to its promise, we hope to acquire the rights and place it into distribution before Christmas.

GENERATIONS OF RESISTANCE

16mm color/52 minutes.

Produced by: Peter Davis & the U.N.

Tentative rental: \$70.

Tentative sale: \$675.

Tentative release: December, 1979.

*For highlights of the
Southern Africa Media
Center library,
see page three.*

Preview of Coming Attractions

A strike has shut down Britain's independent TV companies since early August. What has this to do with the Southern Africa Media Center?

During late July the Center learned of a new British film called *Good-Bye Rhodesia*, produced by Thames TV. We were told that the film offered a revealing glimpse of the true nature of the internal settlement and the black majority's attitude towards it. We became very excited, hoping that here was the film we'd been looking for to counter the rampant press reports of the "new, democratic, majority-ruled Zimbabwe Rhodesia."

We promptly wrote requesting to preview the film, but while our letter was somewhere over the Atlantic, the strike started. It's still on and we are still waiting to see the film.

This story reflects just one of the myriad problems faced in searching the world for that all-too-rare beast, new and useful films on southern Africa. We have, however, managed to identify a number of productions either recently

finished or nearing completion. Apart from *Good-Bye Rhodesia* and *Generations of Resistance* (see page 1), these include:

- **Crossroads.** This film by Jonathan Wacks reveals the richness of community life and the degree of self-organization in this South African shanty town of the same name. We expect it to be completed by the first of the year.
- **Women of Resistance.** Women have played a large and heroic role in the fight against apartheid. This film visits with them and looks at their contributions, including the Defiance Campaigns of 1956. Spring, 1980 completion.
- **To Claim the Future.** Shooting began this summer in Africa on this film by Steve Talbot, Belvie Rooks, Dave Davis, and Reggie Major. U.S. foreign policy (including overt and covert intervention) and corporate involvement, in Africa, as well as the response of the liberation movements, is the subject of this ambitious film.
- **Rhythms of Resistance.** South African



photo credit: Pippa Gordon

A scene shot this summer from *To Claim the Future*.

music, from ancient tribal lullabies to the new militant dances and music now exploding around Johannesburg, is brought alive in this film by Chris Austin and Jeremy Marre. Already completed.

- **Virtue and Necessity** (working title). The inheritance of colonialism and the current unequal relations of trade have resulted in an ironic dependence on South Africa and Rhodesia. By Alan Bell with UNCTAD for ATV. Just being completed.

As these films are completed and we determine that they meet the needs of our users, we will make every effort to acquire them and place them in distribution.

Investing in Apartheid Film User's Manual

What Do You Do When the Lights Go On?

The Southern Africa Media Center will publish its first "activation kit" by December. The kit, called "Investing in Apartheid," includes a detailed handbook outlining an integrated series of innovative learning activities that teachers and group facilitators can use to improve the effectiveness of their film screenings.

This first kit will help a group develop a sense of itself as investors working together to take responsibility for the social consequences of their investment dollars.

The Media Center has always concerned itself with improving methods of film utilization. The effectiveness of films – even the best films – is limited by the means employed in their presentation.

Every decent American abhors apartheid. That isn't the problem. Rather, they ask, what can they do about it? South Africa is 10,000 miles away and things appear out of our hands. Once everyone agrees that apartheid is deplorable, then what? What can you do in the screening of a film to help translate this concern into social action?

More and more organizations feel that one answer lies in the use of their investment dollars. Around the nation, church, student, labor, civic groups, and even municipalities are beginning to look at their bank accounts, investments, pension funds, and consumer dollars as potential instruments for influencing U.S. government and corporate policy towards South Africa.

Furthermore, many of these same groups are looking at ways to use these monies of theirs to meet some of the pressing needs – such as jobs and low-cost housing – in neglected areas of their own communities. This approach allows for many possibilities of concrete actions, actions which also provide a very real link between the futures of our own communities and the lives of black South Africans.

Making use of questionnaires, simulation games, checklists, a discussion guide, background readings, and a resource guide, the activation kit "Investing in Apartheid" will help the user

place his or her film in a context where it will not only inform but initiate specific action programs. After first demystifying the role of investment as a social phenomena and helping the group realize that they themselves actually are investors, the kit will then facilitate the re-examination and re-definition of the group's own social role and potential activities with respect to apartheid.

Though primarily intended for non-formal educational situations (such as church groups), the kit contains many suggestions that college instructors will find useful as well.

"Investing in Apartheid" will be available at a price of \$4.50 including shipping and handling. The Center is also making available a mountable photo exhibit and a cassette recording of Steve Biko, South African poetry, and music for an additional \$5.00 rental fee. This Media Environment of Concern will be particularly appropriate for conferences or in situations where a group gathers regularly.

Orders will be taken beginning in December.

Film Use: Some New Ideas

One reason for the establishment of the Southern Africa Media Center was to allow us to work with academic, church and civic organizations to develop innovative programs using film to strengthen their work around Southern Africa. During the past year our films have emerged as an effective and relatively easy way to translate new programs and conference resolutions into a form where they can

reach and involve an organization's far-flung constituency.

For example, this past April over 200 prominent black church leaders met with representatives of the southern Africa liberation movements at the U.N. The Center arranged to have the film *Six Days in Soweto* shown at this International Freedom Mobilization to document the condition in Southern Africa.

Out of this conference came a resolve to develop understanding and support for these liberation movements in the Black community in this country. Conference participants decided that *Six Days in Soweto* could serve as a convenient tool for bringing the message of the conference back to their churches and communities. To date the film has been used as part of over forty International

continued

Highlights of the Southern Africa Media Center's Library

SIX DAYS IN SOWETO

16mm color/55 minutes/1978

Rental: \$75.00

"The Johannesburg filmmaker calls it 'a children's crusade that has changed South Africa forever'...the moving story of the rebellion of black youngsters (which) began on June 16, 1976...The United Nations estimated that more than 1000 died when the police opened fire...A year after that explosion Anthony Thomas returned to South Africa to produce a documentary on the significance of the events at Soweto. (He) has vividly recreated that traumatic period (and) indicates that the people of Johannesburg either still prefer to close their eyes to the injustices of apartheid—or are arming to defend their way of life."

San Francisco Chronicle

"Nothing is more persuasive than the story told in films. How can we ever forget the searing message of *Six Days in Soweto*?"

The Reverend Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker
Secretary-General, International
Freedom Mobilization

CONTROLLING INTEREST:

THE WORLD OF THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATION

16mm color/45 minutes/1978

Rental: \$60.00

While *Controlling Interest* does not deal directly with the operations of multinational corporations in Southern Africa, it is an important resource for educators and activists concerned with the forces of underdevelopment in the Third World, and the dynamics which underly global expansion of U.S. corporate power.

"*Controlling Interest* brings the crucial issue of who's in control alive... not only in the world's Brazils, South Africas, and Singapores, but right here at home. A unique film!"

Frances Moore Lappe & Joe Collins,
authors of *Food First*

LAST GRAVE AT DIMBAZA

16mm color/55 minutes/1974

Rental: \$65.00

An unmatched investigation of the devastating human costs of the apartheid system in South Africa. *Last Grave at Dimbaza* was shot illegally, smuggled out of the country, and edited in Europe by South African filmmaker Nana Mahomo.

"A powerful film which details the government's systematic attempts to wipe out black family life, retaining only those essentials for a cheap labor force. Cheap is the wrong word. It is a slave labor force."

San Francisco Chronicle

FREE NAMIBIA!

16mm color/27 minutes/1978

Rental: \$40.00

Narrated by Ossie Davis, this UN production captures both the torment and the struggle of Namibia under South African rule. It reveals the myths and rituals of an affluent white settler society and makes clear the widespread support among the black majority for resistance led by SWAPO (South West Africa People's Org.).

Free Namibia! also focuses on the multinational corporations at the base of the country's economy, extracting strategic minerals such as copper, diamonds and uranium. An executive confides: "Everyone invests here, but it is not opportune now to mention names."

NAMIBIA: A CASE STUDY IN COLONIALISM

16mm color/18 minutes/1975

Rental: \$25.00

In our opinion, the best brief account of the origins and changing face of European colonial domination in Africa. The film traces German settlement, the rebellion of Namibian tribes – and their eventual defeat by the guns of Krupp – German occupation replaced by British and ultimately South African rule, penetration of mining and agricultural operations by foreign capital, and the development of a contemporary Namibian resistance movement. Includes a look at the role of the UN as a proponent of Namibian independence.

Freedom Mobilization events in cities across the country.

Now, in the wake of Andrew Young's forced resignation, we are working with other black church and civic organizations to see how films on South Africa can be used to develop a deeper involvement of black Americans in the nation's foreign policy toward Southern Africa.

The Center's films have also been used as "expert testimony" by a number of city governments and professional organizations as part of their deliberations over whether to divest themselves of holdings in banks and corporations doing business with South Africa.

In June, activists in the California Nursing Association, the organization representing most California nurses, screened *Last Grave at Dimbaza* to their Executive Board and annual convention. As a result of extensive lobbying – and the film – the C.N.A. Board has agreed to remove its pension funds and its current account from Wells Fargo Bank, a leading lender to South Africa.

What is the Southern Africa Media Center?

The Southern Africa Media Center is a project of California Newsreel which brings together media specialists, teachers, and concerned citizens to improve the effectiveness of media used in education and organizing around southern Africa.

The Center works closely with academics, church leaders, researchers, and activists to explore innovative techniques for integrating media more closely in an overall process of developing public awareness and participation in southern Africa issues.

Over the years, the Center has acquired the most widely-used library of films on southern Africa available in North America. As part of our commitment to encouraging the broadest possible public involvement in these issues, the Center has followed a unique policy of renting its materials on a "what-you-can-afford" basis to needy groups. And as a result, our films have been widely used not just in schools, but in churches, union locals and neighborhood groups across the country.

How to Rent Films

The Southern Africa Media Center wants everyone to be able to use our films: therefore we maintain a flexible rental policy.

Colleges and universities, student groups, and funded agencies are expected to pay the standard rental fees listed.

Church, labor and civic groups may rent films on ability to pay. Call us and explain your situation.

In all cases, shipping charges are extra. Try to reserve films at least a month in advance and have alternative dates ready.

Order films by calling or writing:

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